

## Chandra, Spitzer Make New Finds

NASA this week reported that the Chandra X-ray Observatory and the Spitzer Space Telescope had made discoveries that will add to scientists' knowledge of galaxy and planet formation.

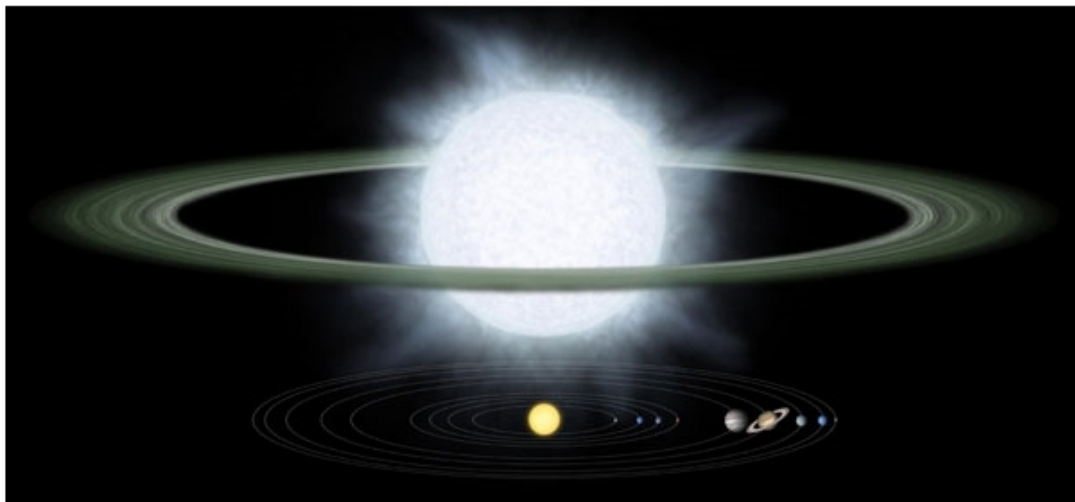
Chandra detected a dim halo of hot gas around NGC 5746, a spiral-shaped galaxy like the Milky Way. Such galaxies are thought to emerge from clouds of intergalactic gas that cool and collapse to form giant, spinning pinwheels of stars and debris surrounded by a halo of gas. Despite scientists' confidence in the concept, the hallmark halo had not been seen until now. Taken from NASA News release: 06-014

(<http://www.nasa.gov/centers/marshall/news/news/releases/2006/06-014.html>)

Spitzer identified two "hypergiant" stars circled by what might be planet-forming dust. The findings surprised astronomers because stars as big as these were thought to be inhospitable to planets. Published 08 February 2006 <http://www.spitzer.caltech.edu/Media/releases/index.shtml>  
Chandra was launched aboard Space Shuttle Columbia in July 1999. Spitzer was launched aboard a Boeing Delta II rocket in August 2003.



Scientists using NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory have found a theorized dim halo of hot gas around a spiral-shaped galaxy. The halo, 60,000 light years across, surrounds galaxy NGC 5746. (Image credit: NASA/CXC/U. Copenhagen/K.Pedersen et al)



This illustration compares the size of a gargantuan star and its surrounding dusty disk (top) with our solar system. (NASA/JPL-Caltech image)